

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

In 1974 the Morrow County Court adopted the first Solid Waste Management Plan for the County, driven primarily by changes in state statute which affected disposal methods in practice at the time. The plan was then updated in 1988 as a result of an application for a regional landfill proposed by Tidewater Barge Lines resulted eventually in the creation of Finley Buttes Regional Landfill. This third version of the Solid Waste Management Plan, (adopted in 2006), is driven by continuing changes in solid waste management conditions and a recognition that the 1988 plan does not provide staff or the County Court sufficient direction in many areas of solid waste and its management.

Morrow County lies along the Columbia River with 35 miles of shoreline, almost midway between the eastern and western boundaries of Oregon, 270 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean. Transportation opportunities for residents and businesses of the County are provided by Interstate 84, the Union Pacific Railroad and the Columbia River all traversing the northern boundary of the County. State Highways 207, 206 and 74 provide a transportation network throughout the County in support of the agricultural community, which forms our economic base.

The land area of Morrow County is approximately 1.3 million acres supporting a certified population estimate in 2003 of 11,750. Most of the population is concentrated in the northern portion of the County in and around the cities of Boardman and Irrigon. The balance of the population is predominately in the Willow Creek Valley, in and around the communities of Heppner, Lexington and Ione.

Solid Waste Prior to 1974

Prior to 1974 most solid waste disposal in Morrow County, like many other rural

3. The 1974 Plan recommended a new site be acquired on property north of the City of Heppner to be used for landfill disposal for all of southern Morrow County. In 1976, Morrow

counties, occurred in open sites and scattered locations, generally in ravines and other natural depressions. Some sites were privately owned while others were publicly owned and operated.

1974 Plan Concerns and Proposed Solutions

In 1974 the County identified several problems involving solid waste, the most pressing problem being the two disposal sites that served Heppner, Lexington and Ione. These were open burning dumps which had become illegal to operate. There was also a recognized need for a disposal site to serve the residents of the northern portion of the County. The following is a summary of the identified problems and the outcomes of the 1974 Plan:

1. The Lexington site, located along the main highway about a mile and a half south of Lexington, was closed in accordance with the recommendations of the 1974 Plan. It was owned by the Town of Lexington.
2. The Heppner site, located southwest of the city in Balm Fork Canyon, was owned and operated by the City of Heppner. While the site appeared to have an indefinite capacity in 1974, it had other problems which made its long-term use doubtful. In addition, closure of the Lexington site and the goal to regionalize solid waste disposal led to the recommendation to close the Heppner site. The site was closed in 1976.

County entered into a lease on the Turner property to develop and operate a solid waste landfill in accordance with the recommendation of the Plan. The

Turner Landfill site is about one and one-fourth mile northeast of downtown Heppner and occupied approximately 15 acres. In 1984 the City of Heppner assumed responsibility for the site from the County and continued to operate the landfill for several years. Upon establishment and operation of the Finley Buttes Landfill, the City of Heppner closed the Turner site in accordance with Department of Environmental Quality guidelines in 1991.

4. To accommodate the long-term needs for solid waste disposal in the northern portion of the County, the 1974 Plan recommended a regional solid waste landfill be established on a parcel of ground known as the BLM site. The Plan anticipated that a site near Hermiston, in neighboring Umatilla County, would be full by 1980. A combination of factors, including less than anticipated population growth and the expansion of the Hermiston landfill site eliminated the need for an alternative north county landfill site. As a result the BLM property was not acquired.
5. The Ione landfill and other open dumps scattered throughout the County have not been acquired and were properly closed as recommended in the 1974 Plan.
6. The 1974 Plan recommended that a County Service District be formed with sufficient taxing authority to provide the necessary resources to implement the recommendations of the Plan. This recommendation of the 1974 Plan has not been implemented.

The first Morrow County Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee (SWAC) was formed in 1976 in response to new State standards for landfills and, accordingly, to develop a long-range plan to provide adequate local disposal sites and facilities; regional disposal sites; to develop minimum standards for the location and operation of disposal sites; and, to make recommendations to the County concerning franchise applicants and complaints. This SWAC consisted of the mayors of the five incorporated cities in Morrow County, the Morrow County Planning Director, three members of the general public and any other County Court appointed members or advisors.

The Committee worked diligently to find new landfill solutions but by 1985 the SWAC reported that Morrow County did not have the funds to continue operation of the only permitted landfill in the County nor did they have the funds to close it. The Committee decided to receive recommendations from each city and proposals from private enterprise to help solve the solid waste situation.

In December 1986 Morrow County was presented with a feasibility study for a regional landfill near Finley Buttes by Tidewater Barge Lines, which was looking for a place to dispose of solid waste from its transfer stations in the Vancouver area. This was the ideal solution for the County to solve the landfill problem and the proposal was welcomed by the County Court. In May 1988 the representatives of Tidewater Barge Lines requested the County form a Solid waste Disposal Site Advisory Committee pursuant to ORS 459.320 and 325. The existing SWAC then was reorganized to meet the State regulation. The revised SWAC held their first meeting on June 21, 1988. The new, statutorily correct duties of the SWAC included:

- Reviewing the operation and long-term monitoring of Finley Buttes Landfill and;

Solid Waste Advisory Committee

- Providing a forum for citizen involvement and dialogue between the community and the owner or operator of the regional landfill. The committee was to meet 4 times a year and prepare an annual written report summarizing the local citizens' concerns and how the landfill owner/operator was addressing those concerns.

In 1990 Finley Buttes Landfill opened for business and began receiving waste from the County and other regional sources. Finley Buttes Landfill Company was created from Tidewater upon its opening and was formed under the umbrella company of Columbia Resource Company which also operated two transfer stations in Clark County, Washington. Wes Hickey, as president and owner, was an active member of the SWAC and contributed to the present-day friendly relationship the County shares with Finley Buttes Landfill. In 1999 Wes sold the Landfill to Waste Connections, Inc.

Through the years the SWAC has met at least once a year to review and discuss operations at Finley Buttes Landfill and deal with topics such as transfer stations, recycling programs, waste collector franchises, road access issues and the rare complaints from Morrow County citizens. At the end of each year the SWAC presents an annual report to the County Court.

1988 Plan Concerns and Proposed Solutions

The 1988 Plan update was driven by an application from Tidewater Barge Lines to site a regional landfill, meeting in spirit the goal of the 1974 Plan, to identify and construct a regional landfill. The Plan update in 1988 was focused on the development of a regional landfill and the impacts of such a development to the County and the region. The only other consideration discussed in the 1988 Plan was a Proposed Waste Reduction Program which included alternatives, elements and an implementation schedule.

The Finley Buttes Regional Landfill, owned and operated in 2004 by Waste Connections, Inc., was opened on the first of November in 1990 and began accepting solid waste from the public in June of 1991.

A transfer station located at the Landfill was also made available for Morrow County residents to drop off solid waste and recyclables.

In support of the Proposed Waste Reduction Program component of the 1988 Plan a transfer station managed by the County was opened in 1991 between Heppner and Lexington on Highway 74 to serve the needs of the residents in the southern portion of the County. A second transfer station located near the intersection of Bombing Range Road, Frontage Lane, and the Interstate 84 and Highway 730 interchange was opened in 2005. It is also managed by the County.

2005 Plan Concerns

It is now more than 30 years since the County adopted its first Solid Waste Management Plan and much has changed. The County's population has doubled and the economic forces within the County have also changed. Forest products and the timber industry were a major economic force in the southern portion of the County in 1974. Now the timber industry is almost nonexistent with the closure of the Kinzua Mill in 1999 and many legislated changes in forest practices. Another change that Morrow County has seen over the past decade or more is the process that the United States Army has undertaken to incinerate the stockpile of munitions at the Umatilla Chemical Depot located between Hermiston and Boardman on Interstate 84. The Depot is situated on property located in Morrow and Umatilla Counties.

The citizens of Morrow County today face the following specific challenges with respect to solid waste. These concerns were identified by Planning Staff and the County Court:

1. The current plan and implementing ordinances do not provide adequate direction for solid waste planning and management within Morrow County.
2. Activity at the Umatilla Army Chemical Depot has been addressed through the adoption of a Toxic Waste Ordinance. Compliance with this Ordinance, however, has been difficult to achieve.
3. Much has been learned over the past fourteen years concerning the operation of the Finley Buttes Regional Landfill. The current Plan and implementing ordinance do not provide adequate guidance in regard to this operation.
4. The County is operating two transfer stations and Finley Buttes Landfill operates a transfer station. There have been questions which need to be addressed concerning the need for additional transfer stations or better mechanisms to manage waste.
5. Change has been a constant in Morrow County as the population has doubled since the first plan was adopted, a regional landfill has been sited, a Full Composting Facility at Threemile Canyon Farms began operation, and the Army has begun destruction of the munitions stockpiled at the Umatilla Army Chemical Depot. These changes need to be reflected in the County's Solid Waste Management Plan and implementing ordinances.

The following issues and concerns were identified by the Management Plan Advisory Committee (MPAC), created to support staff

during the Plan update process. Also incorporated into the following are the concerns identified by the public through the Public Meeting and Hearing process:

1. The need for County agreements with incorporated jurisdictions that have no implemented solid waste management plan or ordinances.
2. The need to have the administration of solid waste programs, implementing Ordinance and Plan management clearly assigned and funded.

2005 Plan Purpose and Organization

The 2005 Plan update serves a number of functions, predominately as a planning tool for issues and concerns relative to solid waste and its management in Morrow County. More specifically, the 2005 Plan provides for the County a mechanism by which to plan for solid waste management and then to track our progress.

Morrow County Solid Waste Goals:

The following goals are designed to provide guidance for managing Morrow County's solid waste systems and meeting its administrative, funding, implementation and enforcement requirements in the future:

1. Provide flexibility to respond to changes in disposal alternatives, new technologies and new regulations;
2. Provide for a uniform level of solid waste management services to all constituents;
3. Determine ways to encourage waste reduction, reuse and recycling of materials in order to meet State requirements;
3. Dedicate part of the funds generated from the solid waste stream to

administer and manage solid waste programs, the implementing Ordinance, and Plan management;

Program in order to educate and encourage Morrow County citizens to reduce the amount of solid waste which they dispose;

4. Provide an ongoing Waste Prevention
5. Identify how solid waste is collected, transferred, transported, and disposed in Morrow County;
6. Determine the benefits of alternative solid waste management disposal methods such as composting;
7. Identify Special Waste Management issues and provide guidance in management of those special waste streams;
8. Identify illegal disposal methods and provide direction and guidance for controlling and reducing illegal dumping and open burning;
9. Maintain and add to or expand the SWAC's duties to include administration and enforcement of the adopted Solid Waste Management Plan; and
10. Utilize Intergovernmental agreements to support solid waste management in communities without implemented solid waste management plans or ordinances.

Location is Old Page:Old Paragraph New Page:New Paragraph.

Paragraph numbers shown as zero refer to the part of a paragraph that is carried over from the previous page. The {Hrt/Hpg/Tab/Spc} codes are generic symbols which refer to categories of end-of-line, tab/indent, or space codes.

- 4:12 4:12 Delete The solid waste system sh...
- 4:12 4:12 Insert Provide
- 4:12 4:12 Change . -To- ;
- 4:13 4:13 Change The system should provide -To- Provide
- 4:13 4:13 Insert a
- 4:13 4:13 Insert solid waste management
- 4:13 4:13 Change . -To- ;
- 4:14 4:14 Delete The County should determi...
- 4:14 4:14 Insert Determine
- 4:14 4:14 Insert in order
- 4:14 4:14 Change . -To- ;
- 4:15 4:15 Delete Funds
- 4:15 4:15 Insert Dedicate part of the fund...
- 4:15 4:15 Delete should be dedicated in p...
- 4:15 4:15 Delete .
- 4:15 4:15 Insert , the implementing Ordina...
- 4:16 4:16 Delete The County should work to...
- 4:16 4:16 Insert Provide
- 4:16 4:16 Insert in order
- 4:16 4:16 Change use correct -To- reduce the amount of
- 4:16 4:16 Change disposal practices. -To- which they dispose;
- 5:1 5:1 Delete to alternativedisposal
- 5:1 5:1 Insert of alternative solid wast...
- 5:2 5:2 Change to -To- in
- 5:3 5:3 Insert and open burning
- 5:4 5:4 Change help administer -To- include administration
- 5:4 5:4 Delete enforce the recommendatio...
- 5:4 5:4 Insert enforcement
- 5:4 5:4 Insert adopted
- 5:5 5:5 Insert Utilize